



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

views, on all themes of moral and political interest, and the ardent, yet not intemperate patriotism, which still binds the exile to the beautiful land of his birth. His volumes cannot be commended, indeed, as an elementary text-book for the young beginner. But to those who have made some advance in Italian literature, and to cultivated minds generally, they will suggest much food for meditation, melancholy though it be, on the singular destinies of a nation, which, endowed with the fatal gift of beauty, seems doomed to contend in vain against circumstances, — in the eloquent language of her poet,

“Per servir sempre, o vincitrice, o vinta.”

ART. V.—*On Natural Theology.* By THOMAS CHALMERS, D. D. and LL. D., Professor of Theology in the University of Edinburgh, and Corresponding Member of the Royal Institute of France. New York : Robert Carter. 1840. 2 vols. 12mo. pp. 404 and 420.

DR. CHALMERS was one of the persons appointed, under the will of the late Earl of Bridgewater, to write a treatise “On the Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of God, as manifested in the Creation.” This general subject being divided into eight branches, the portion of it allotted to our author was “The Adaptation of External Nature to the Moral and Intellectual Condition of Man.” The work which Dr. Chalmers published, in compliance with this call, has been for some years before the public, and we have had occasion in this Journal to express, incidentally, our opinion of its merits. The volumes now before us contain a republication of the Bridgewater Treatise, with some additional chapters on the argument for the being of a God, and on a few other subjects, designed so far to fill out the deficiencies of the former publication, as to entitle the entire work to be called an exposition of the whole science of Natural Theology. These supplementary portions of the book are all that require present notice, and very few words may suffice for a consideration of their merits and defects.

Dr. Chalmers does not appear qualified in an eminent

degree, either by the peculiarities of his style, or his habits of study and thought, to become a scientific writer. With a great command of words, considerable power of amplifying a subject, and, at times, of expressing himself with much force and earnestness, he lacks precision of statement and definiteness of views. His style is often incorrect, and almost always verbose and tumid, and, amidst a wilderness of words, the reader is sometimes at a loss how to find any meaning whatever. Such a style may be very effective in the pulpit, where familiar thoughts are to be handled, to be amplified and set forth under every variety of aspect. The constant repetitions will enable the hearer to comprehend the general drift of the argument, and the swell and copiousness of language will fasten it upon his memory. But the inaccuracy and vagueness of such a manner are serious objections in a scientific treatise. One is often puzzled by contradictory statements, and loses sight of the chief object of inquiry, while the author is expatiating at great length on some incidental topic.

But these defects might be pardoned, if they did not proceed from much confusion of thought, and a hasty manner of prosecuting an abstract inquiry. Dr. Chalmers elaborates nothing, but gives out the first draft of his arguments and speculations, pretty much in the order in which they first occurred to him. Consequently, there is no proportion between the parts, but a crude mass of materials is presented, which, if duly worked over, might be found to contain many sound remarks, and some trains of reasoning and reflection, followed out with considerable success. The subject of his Bridgewater Treatise, forms but a small fraction of the whole science of Natural Theology. But, desirous of publishing something, that should appear to cover the whole ground, without revising or retrenching to any extent the original work, he annexes to it a few introductory chapters, interpolates one or two more in the body of the book, and then sends it forth as a new and complete treatise.

Dr. Chalmers is not a learned writer; at least, not in this department of science. Of many important contributions to Natural Theology, he makes no mention whatever, and thus many arguments and objections pass unnoticed by him, a full consideration of which is essential to any effective treatment of the subject at the present day. Dr. Thomas Brown is

about the only philosophical writer, with whose works he appears to be fully acquainted, though neither the general reputation, nor the completeness of this author's speculations, make him a very safe guide in abstruse and difficult inquiries. Dr. Chalmers does not in himself possess sufficient acuteness and skill in treating metaphysical questions to make up for this lack of information, and the chapters in which he hazards any attempt at subtle and refined reasoning, as, for instance, in answering the objections of Hume, are among the least satisfactory portions of the book.

In spite of these defects, there is some valuable matter in these volumes. Dr. Chalmers has a full perception of the true nature of the question, and a clear insight into the principles on which it must be resolved. If he has not added much to the argument for the being of a God, he has not perplexed it with any extraneous matter. Good sense and a vigorous mind may be discerned through the cloudy envelope of words, in which his remarks are enclosed. The spirit in which he has conducted the inquiry, and the general tenor of his reasoning, may be inferred from the following remark.

"We hold it with Paley greatly more judicious, instead of groping for the evidence of a Divinity among the transcendental generalities of time, and space, and matter, and spirit, and the grounds of a necessary and eternal existence for the one, while nought but modifications and contingency can be observed of the other, — we hold it more judicious, simply to open our eyes on the actual and peopled world around us, — or to explore the wondrous economy of our own spirits, and try if we can read, as in a book of palpable and illuminated characters, the traces or the forth-goings of a creative mind anterior to, or at least, distinct from matter, and which both arranged it in its present order and continues to overrule its processes." — Vol. i. p. 113.

The expression here is a fair sample of that wordy manner, of which we have complained ; but the opinions, which are stated, respecting the proper character of the reasoning to be employed in Natural Theology, appear sound and judicious. They agree substantially with the views, which we attempted, in a very imperfect manner, to set forward and defend in the last number of this Journal.* As we propose

* See pp. 102 *et seq.*

to resume the subject, with a view to correct some possible misconceptions of those views, and to consider more at length the inevitable consequences of encumbering the science of Natural Theology with metaphysical speculations, it may be worth while, for the benefit of those who have not perused the former article, to restate, in a very succinct manner, the ground which was therein taken.

We endeavoured to show, that the great doctrine of Natural Theology does not belong to that class of abstract and mathematical truths, to which alone demonstrative reasoning is applicable ; — that the being of a God is a reality, and his existence a fact, to be proved like any other fact in natural science, by arguments of the same kind, though superior in number and force. An examination of all the forms of the *a priori* argument was intended to prove, not only that the reasoning itself was entirely inconclusive, but that it was founded on a misconception of the nature of the question at issue ; — that the proposers of it, by overlooking the distinction just mentioned between two classes of truth, which are wholly unlike, had fallen into the grave error of representing the Divine Being as a mere abstraction, and thereby, though unintentionally, had played into the hands of a set of metaphysical atheists of our day, who would fain pull down the Eternal from his throne in the hearts of men, and substitute in his place a principle, — an idea, — a nothing, — without consciousness, personality, or intelligence. We sought to point out the true character of the argument *a posteriori*, or the proof from design, and to show its completeness and sufficiency ; — to prove, that the only objections to it were of a metaphysical character, and proceeded from the misconception noticed above ; — that, by exhibiting the unfitness and inapplicability of such abstract reasoning in this case, not only would the science of Natural Theology be freed from the rotten supports and profitless speculations, by which it had been encumbered, but also the only sound argument for the vital doctrine at issue would be relieved from all the cavils and objections, by which it has been attacked, and be placed on its true basis, alike unassailed and unassailable. A comparison between the truths which the theist seeks to establish, and the doctrines of all the inductive sciences was meant to prove, that they must stand or fall together ; — that the reasoning which invalidates the one would be equally conclusive against the others ; — and that the reasoner had

accomplished enough both for faith and practice, when he had shown, that the great fact of religion can be attacked only by arguments, which would subvert the whole fabric of human knowledge, and render all belief and action alike impossible.

These views were very inadequately explained in the short space to which the limits of a single article confined us ; and much might now be said to elucidate and support them. But we do not intend to go over the same ground again, except for the sake of correcting some misconceptions, and of examining more fully a cognate subject,—the propriety of mingling the science of metaphysics with that of theology, or rather of uniting the two in a close and indissoluble union. A full and fair consideration of this question might be serviceable at any time and under all circumstances ; but the discussion of it appears particularly seasonable at the present day, when abstract speculation has taken a wider field and a bolder license, than it ever assumed before.

And here it may be remarked, once for all, that we are dealing with opinions, and not with persons. This is neither the time nor the place for impugning the motives of individuals, for throwing doubts upon the purity of their faith, or of charging upon them the consequences, that are fairly deducible from their opinions. All abstract speculations may be considered as published anonymously ; there is a better chance of weighing them with candor and correctness, when the personal character of their authors or supporters is not allowed to bias the decision. It is possible to expose and reprobate in the plainest terms the sophistical character of an argument, or the degrading and pernicious effects of certain doctrines, and yet not “*bate a jot*” of the high respect due to men who may have used such reasoning, or entertained such sentiments, without examining with due care their purport and tendency. In showing that the *a priori* proof leads by necessary consequence to a doctrine, that can hardly be distinguished from atheism, we are not using an argument *ad invidiam*, nor attempting to cast a reproach on the reputation or the principles of those who adopt and defend such reasoning. The name of the great champion of this argument stands too high in the English church to be tarnished by the slightest breath of suspicion or calumny. But the liability to gross abuse is in itself a consideration of weight against the

adoption of any class of speculations ; and a false and destructive doctrine, that is fairly deducible from them, constitutes a *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole system. As such, it may properly be pointed out, and held up to public reprobation.

In distinguishing the two modes of proving the being of a God, as the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* argument, we were fully aware, that there is an ambiguity in the use of the former term. But the usage of English writers has been so uniform in this respect, that a misconception was hardly possible, except by bringing in the different application of the phrase, which has become current among the imitators and disciples of the German philosophers. Yet, to avoid the chance even of this mistake, we stated, that, "if the meaning of the term be restricted to original and intuitive perceptions, which are independent of experience, the distinction implied by the two phrases does not exist. These first principles of belief are implied in every act of ratiocination ; they are taken for granted in the argument from experience, and in every other proof." These intuitive perceptions are called "principles of common sense" by Reid ; Stewart designates them as "fundamental laws of human belief" ; Kant calls them "*a priori* cognitions of pure reason." Now, it is perfectly idle to adopt this Kantian phrase as the only legitimate one, and then to heap up authorities and arguments to show, that such intuitive elements of truth enter into every process of reasoning, and, therefore, we must argue *a priori* for the existence of a God, or not at all. No one, who is at all acquainted with the subject, ever doubted this fact. But the admission of it makes nothing in favor of what is technically called the *a priori* argument in Natural Theology ; and to allege this fact in such a course of reasoning, and with such a purpose, is mere sophistry.

According to its etymology, and its use in treatises of logic, an *a priori* argument is one in which the reasoning proceeds from cause to effect, and from principles to consequences. And that Dr. Clarke really intended to use it in this sense, appears from a passage in one of his letters to a correspondent, who had brought forward the objection, that such reasoning could not establish the existence of a *First Cause*. Dr. Clarke replies, by affirming that a First Cause could be deduced from the antecedent principle of *necessity*, and by reasoning which should be strictly *a priori*. "For though

no thing, no being, can be prior to that Being which is the First Cause and original of all things, yet there must be in nature a ground or reason, a permanent ground or reason, of the existence of the First Cause. Arguments may and must be drawn from the nature and consequences of that necessity, by which the First Cause exists." It was quite pertinent, then, on our part, to restate the objection made by Clarke's correspondent, and to show that the answer to it was not satisfactory, because the reasoner had actually, though unwittingly, assumed an empirical *datum*, or a fact from experience, in his proof, and thereby had wholly destroyed its *a priori* character. He promised to lead us up to the great truth of all religion by a new path,—to "nobly take the high *priori* road, and reason downwards"; but, after a little digression, he conducts us back again to the old travelled way, where alone we can obtain firm footing.

But, as neither mode of explaining the phrase "*a priori*" supplies a plain line of demarcation between the two classes of proofs, under all the forms in which they have been proposed, we conceived, that they might be aptly distinguished, by considering the one as a professed *demonstration* of the object sought, and the other as laying claim only to *moral* certainty in the conclusion. This distinction is not incidental and unimportant, but it expresses the fundamental difference between the two modes of reasoning, and it covers the whole question, with which we have any thing to do. Dr. Clarke called his book a "Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of a God," and repeatedly alludes with satisfaction to his favorite mode of reasoning, as producing absolute certainty, while the argument *a posteriori* afforded only moral proof. "The proof *a priori* is," he remarks, "as I fully believe, strictly demonstrative"; though he immediately admits, that "it is of use only against learned and metaphysical difficulties." Descartes placed his ontological proof of the Divine Existence at the very foundation of his philosophical system, which was to do away with all doubts and uncertainties in speculation, and supply an immovable basis of truth, as a starting-point for all subsequent inquiries. He sought to establish this great fact next after that of his own existence, at a time when he still professed to doubt the reality of the outward world, the deductions of experience, and the truth of every principle in philosophy and science.

Having secured this point, as he imagined, in a way that defied all scrutiny and doubt, he proceeded to erect upon it the whole fabric of human knowledge.

Now, half the evil consists in the magnitude of these pretensions. It is plainly implied in them, that the other argument, which leads only to *moral* certainty, is insufficient, that mankind must either renounce the belief in a God, or accept the fine-spun reasoning and philosophical systems with which this doctrine has been connected. A technical distinction in logic between two kinds of evidence is set up, as if it affected our belief of the facts which they tend respectively to support. Practically, this is not true ; the two sorts of reasoning differ in kind, but not in degree. Everybody knows, that the highest degree of moral proof produces a conviction, which all the demonstrations ever invented could neither amend nor increase. As the logicians talk, not even death is certain, but what person's hope or fear of that dread event would be quickened by a demonstration, that it must happen. The reader of this page is not, in logical phrase, *absolutely certain* that the black marks upon it were not produced by mere accident,—by upsetting an inkstand, for instance. It cannot be demonstrated, that any human being ever designed to convey any meaning by them, or that, in pursuance of this purpose, a printer was employed to set up the types, and thus produce the requisite symbols of thought. But the reader's conviction of this fact is firm, notwithstanding the alleged defect of evidence, and all the reasoning in Euclid could not increase his faith. In like manner, the sublime dogma of the existence of a God is written all over the face of creation ; but some philosophers would fain persuade men to shut their eyes, and not read the characters, because, forsooth, the truth is not demonstrated by them.

An analysis of the celebrated argument of Descartes showed that this philosopher also, as well as Dr. Clarke, had deceived himself in respect to the true character of his reasoning, which really proceeded from the effect to the cause, though he fancied that it was strictly *a priori*. Having proved, as he thought, that the idea of God in his own mind did not come from the senses, nor from his own imagination and reflection, it followed that the Infinite Being himself must have placed it there, that it might bear evidence to its Creator. After exposing the fallacy of the supposition, that the

whole idea of Deity, as it exists in an educated and intelligent mind, is intuitive and innate, because some of its elements may possess this character, we remarked, that the argument, at best, was only a proof *a posteriori*, for it was "the same thing, whether we reason from the anatomy of the body or that of the mind, when the peculiar structure of each is the only ground for affirming, that it is the work of an intelligent Creator." Descartes was guilty of an inconsistency, moreover, in introducing the argument at such an early stage in his inquiries, when he had as yet proved only his own existence, and the presence of ideas to his mind ; for, although the reasoning did not appeal to the external world, it took for granted the law of causality, or the legitimacy of arguing from the effect to the cause, a principle which the philosopher had not yet demonstrated, but which, with all other principles, he had expressly called into doubt.

It may be objected to this account, that Descartes proposed his argument in another form, in which, without resting on the law of causality, he argued directly, from the internal characteristics of the idea itself, that God must exist. But those who make this objection ought to know, that the form in which we stated the argument was the one originally adopted by the philosopher, and explained at large in his "Third Meditation," where it supplies one link to the chain of principles and reasonings, which form his metaphysical system. Afterwards, when hard pressed by his opponents, and, as it appears to us, with a view of covering his retreat by logical artifice and a cloud of words, he restated the argument in a form, which may be found in his "Answers to Objections." Very brief extracts will suffice to show, that Descartes really proposed the argument which we attributed to him. The following is from his "Third Meditation." "Although the idea of *substance* is in me from the very reason that I am myself a substance, still, I, who am a finite being, could not have the idea of an *infinite* substance, if it had not been placed in me by some being, who was truly infinite." And in the "Answers to Objections," he expresses himself still more plainly, thus : "The existence of God is demonstrated by its EFFECTS,—from this fact alone, that his idea is in us." We were guilty, therefore, of no injustice toward this philosopher, in affirming that the argument, which was embodied in his system of philosophy, was wholly

a posteriori. The other statement of the proof, though it excited more discussion at the time, from the skill with which it was worded, which renders it difficult to detect the fallacy, is now admitted to be sophistical, and, as such, is generally abandoned. Precluded by our limits from following Descartes through all his discussions with his opponents, we considered only that form of the proof, which he originally proposed and incorporated into his system, and which is admitted to be sound so far as it goes, although it is not of an *a priori* character; while we put aside the second statement of it, which was only an after thought, and is now universally acknowledged to possess no weight whatever. Certainly, the omission did no injustice to Descartes.

This second manner of stating the argument may be briefly expressed as follows, — very nearly in the author's own words, though sentences are brought together, which are not united in his "Answers to Objections." The existence of God is known from the mere consideration of his nature; for necessary existence is contained in his nature, or in the conception of God, as it is present to our minds. Possible existence is contained in the notion or idea of all things, which we conceive clearly and distinctly; but necessary existence is contained only in the idea of God. Now, it is a greater perfection to be a real existence and to be in the understanding also, than to be only in the understanding. But my idea of God is that of an all-perfect being; therefore he really exists. Or the argument may be still more briefly stated as follows; In the idea of God are contained all the attributes of a perfect being; but necessary existence is one of those attributes; therefore, he necessarily exists.

We presume that any person, when this argument was first proposed to him, would say, that it must be a sophism, or a mere play upon words, though he might not be able at once to detect the fallacy. It forcibly reminds one of the puzzles, that are often inserted in treatises of logic, as exercises for the learner, where the conclusion is at once perceived to be an absurdity, though it seems to rest on perfectly formal and legitimate reasoning. In this case, the whole fallacy consists in substituting the phrase "necessary existence" for the "idea of necessary existence." It is perfectly correct to say, that the *idea* of necessary existence enters into our complex notion of a God. But the reality

does not follow from the idea, any more than the reality of a winged horse follows from my conception of such an animal,—of Pegasus, for instance ; or, still more pertinently, the reality in this case can no more be inferred from the idea, than the actual presence of a perfect circle on the paper before me can be deduced from the mathematical, that is, the perfect, conception of such a circle, which exists in my mind. To say, that “necessary existence” is contained in the idea of God, is to talk nonsense ; for real existence is the direct opposite of ideal existence, and it is, therefore, a contradiction in terms to affirm, that the former is contained in the latter. But we are ashamed to offer a serious confutation of such sophistry. Descartes would scarcely have proposed it, if he had not thought to escape from the assaults of his opponents by a logical jugglery.

It seems hardly necessary to allude again to Cousin’s argument, which that writer himself has reduced to an absurdity, by showing what is the only conception of a God, to which such reasoning can lead. But, as it is possible to modify so vague a statement materially, without losing any of its essence, and, by combining it with the Cartesian proof, to give the whole argument a plausible air, it may be worth while to examine it more closely. The compound argument, made up from the reasoning of Cousin and Descartes, may be explained as follows. Our internal recognition of ourselves as finite, limited, imperfect, and dependent beings, compels us to form the conception of a Being, who is infinite, unlimited, perfect, and independent. The reasoning, thus far explained, shows how the idea of God rises in the soul, but supplies no means of passing over from the idea of him to the conviction of his actual existence. It is said further, then, that the conviction which we have of our own *dependent* existence as realities, necessitates the belief in a being on whom we depend, as equally a reality, and not a mere idea. Dependence implies one who affords support, just as much as design implies a designer. The author of that support cannot be another dependent being like ourselves, for then the question arises, on what does *he* depend ; and so on, until we arrive at a being, who is the aider and supporter of all.

Now it must be remembered, that we have to do only with the assumed *a priori* character of this proof,—with the assertion, that it supplies a means whereby we can pass from

the idea of God in the soul to a knowledge of the reality, without having recourse to experience, — and with the consequent assertion, that, as the reasoning contains no empirical element, it supplies demonstrative proof of the Divine Existence. Then, the first question which arises, respects the original and intuitive character of these four characteristics of human nature and existence, as they exist in our idea. Does consciousness, previously to all experience, make us known to ourselves under all four of the attributes or qualities here enumerated? Certainly we know, whether by a primitive intuition or not, that we are limited, imperfect, and, — in one sense of the word, at least, — finite. But how *dependent*? This is the attribute, which is added to Cousin's enumeration, and the whole force of the present argument is rested upon it, though, by so doing, the reasoner takes for granted the very point at issue. We wholly deny the possibility of learning from consciousness, by a direct and spontaneous perception, that we are dependent beings. The feeling of dependence must be subsequent to a knowledge of the being or thing, on whom we rely for support, just as the feeling of gratitude is necessarily subsequent to our recognition of a benefactor. Gratitude and dependence are both ideas of relation ; both imply a subject and an object ; and it is absurd to suppose, that a relative idea can first suggest the knowledge of one of its terms. If I am already aware of the existence of another being besides myself, I can have an idea of the relationship in which he stands to me, as father, brother, or friend ; but it is preposterous to suppose, that I can first have a general idea of relationship, and be guided by that to a knowledge of the person to whom I am related. The argument inverts the order of the two ideas. It is either experience or the knowledge of a God, which teaches us the folly of entire self-reliance, and not the feeling of depending upon something, which teaches us what that something is.

This knowledge of our condition as dependent beings does not come so early in the history of ideas. We soon learn the frailty, weakness, and imperfection of our nature, but only slowly and by degrees are we made aware of the fact, that there is one without and around us, whose constant providence sustains the weak structure, and prevents our frail nature momentarily from sinking into decay and ruin. A stone is a limited and imperfect thing, a dead and power-

less mass ; but it does not so readily appear, at first sight, a contingent and dependent substance, which was created and made what it is, and endowed ever with the force of gravity, by which it is fastened to the earth. The hypothesis of the materialist and the atheist is at least a conceivable one, that it always existed, and that it continues to exist by blind necessity and the nature of things. In like manner, animal, or even intelligent, life, small as its powers are, and limited as the sphere is, through which they act, does not appear immediately, and to the uninstructed understanding, as an existence supported by a power foreign to itself. The heart beats and the lungs play seemingly by the force of their own mechanism, and without interference ; and ideas come thronging into the mind in what appears a constant and necessary connexion, to which, at the first glance, we attribute neither limit nor end. But the understanding, enlightened by experience of interruption and decay, and instructed by analogy, learns the really frail and contingent constitution of this nature, and that it must be constantly upheld by a power external to itself, or it would sink into dissolution.

And here we might leave the argument, as stripped of its undue pretensions and metaphysical character, and retaining whatever weight may be attributed to it among the other proofs from experience, with which it may be classed. But there is another fallacy in the original statement of it, which, as it shows the impropriety of representing it as only a modification of the Cartesian proof, may here be pointed out. We observe, then, that the force of the reasoning depends in no degree whatever on the *idea* of dependence, but only on the *fact*, as ascertained and verified by experience, or by any other means. The fact, that human nature is weak and incapable of supporting itself, compels us to believe in a creating and sustaining Deity. But the idea or thought of such dependence, so long as it is not corroborated by proof, does not accredit this doctrine, any more than the belief in the independence of human nature, which it is very possible some skeptics may entertain, vouches the truth of the atheistical hypothesis. And it cannot be said, that this idea has a place among the primitive intuitions of the soul, and therefore deserves credit for its own sake, though destitute of any support from without ; for, besides the insuperable objections which we have already urged against such a classification,

it is violating all probability and all the rules of philosophy to assign an *a priori* origin to a cognition, which experience is perfectly competent to supply.

And here one observation may be addressed to those, who are so much interested in opposing the doctrine of Condillac, that all our knowledge comes from the senses, or the less objectionable one, which is commonly ascribed to Locke, that all knowledge is founded on experience. It is poor policy on their part, to multiply hastily and unnecessarily the number of those principles, to which they ascribe an intuitive and spontaneous origin. We believe, that there are other ideas, like that of cause, the *genesis* of which cannot satisfactorily be explained, either by external or by mental experience. But their number is not fully ascertained, nor are their characteristics clearly defined ; and it behoves the philosopher to proceed with the utmost caution in making additions to the list. To seek support for any hypothesis or argument by hastily claiming the character of an ultimate principle for the idea on which it rests, and branding all those, who oppose or doubt it, with a disposition to favor the Sensualist school, is merely to go on spinning one ideal cobweb after another, which the skeptic will sweep away with the first stroke of his besom. Such a procedure is the poor resource either of indolence, which will not attentively examine, or of sophistry, which would willingly deceive.

A striking instance of this willingness to multiply ultimate principles, may be found in the speculations of some writers upon the argument from final causes. They affirm, that *design* is an intuitive idea, a conception of pure reason, called out and developed, it is true, by experience, but not growing out of that experience. We can hardly believe that they are serious in this assertion. If *design* be considered merely as synonymous with *intention*, or *purpose*, then it is evident, that we can have no knowledge of it until we have had experience of a purpose, that is, until we have intended or designed to perform some act. The origin of the idea is in reflection, or the observation of what passes in our own minds. So we experience a certain emotion, and apply a name to it, in order to distinguish it from other emotions, that differ from it in kind, or are excited by a different class of objects. But it would be very strange to say, that love, or wonder, or pity, was an intuitive idea.

It is very true, that we mean something more than mere *intention*, in speaking of the argument from final causes. But the case here is still stronger against the assertion, which we are now considering. In this case, design is a very complex notion, nearly all the elements of it being drawn from mental experience. They are founded on our observation of ourselves, and are successively elaborated and united into the complex notion, which we call design. The idea rests originally on a perception of the relation of means to an end. Having observed, that a particular event followed immediately after another, or several others, and connecting the consequent with these antecedents, by an intuitive application of the law of causality, and believing that the course of nature is uniform, or that like effects will follow like causes, and desiring that the consequent event may again occur,—we *act*; that is, we exert our agency to bring about events similar to the former antecedent ones, doing this under the expectation, that a similar consequent event will follow. Thus design implies,—first, *intelligence*, or a knowledge of the laws of causality and uniformity;—secondly, particular *experience* of some one event, A, happening in immediate connexion with several others, B and C;—thirdly, a *will* to reproduce the event A;—fourthly, *action*, in order to bring about the events B and C, under—(fifthly) an *expectation* that A will immediately follow. Are these five elements *all of a priori* origin? Is not action necessarily implied in design? And how can we have an idea of it until we have acted; that is, until we have had experience, and derived knowledge directly from that experience?

It is, indeed, in the complexity of this notion, that the importance of the argument from final causes almost wholly consists. Wherever we find indications of design, there is evidence, to an equal extent, of intelligence, will, activity, and foresight. The God there revealed, is an individual, self-conscious, and creative being, and not a mere vague principle, dimly inferred from transcendental musings,—*aliquid immensum infinitumque*,—but without personality, activity, or intelligence. And this difference between the conclusions, to which the two kinds of reasoning lead, is frankly acknowledged by the greatest advocate of the *a priori* scheme. Dr. Clarke expressly admits, that the intelligence of the Deity cannot be established by the demonstrative method, but must be inferred from the evidences of design.

The same disposition to multiply the spontaneous elements of human intelligence may be seen in the speculations of several writers on the nature of the religious principle in the soul. They place it in the same class with the emotions of beauty and moral approbation, affirming that, in each case, there is not only a feeling or sentiment, which leads us to appreciate the beautiful, the virtuous, and the holy, but an idea on which this sentiment rests, a type of the object to which it relates ; so that the soul is originally endowed, not only with a feeling, to be called out and exercised by knowledge subsequently acquired, but with a primitive notion or pattern, by comparison with which we learn to correct whatever is afterwards afforded by experience, and to distinguish the real from the factitious, the true from the false. We have no room here to go over the broad field of discussion, that is opened by this theory. We can only point out a single, but insuperable objection to the whole scheme, and notice the fallacy of the theological argument, that is founded upon it, together with the mischievous consequences, to which this argument leads.

To begin with the theory of taste, it is urged, that we immediately pronounce an object to be beautiful or the opposite, and that this decision must proceed from a comparison of the object with the idea of beauty previously existing in our minds ; that this standard cannot be the recollection of another beautiful object, previously seen, for the question then arises, what made us esteem this previous object beautiful ; we are driven back, therefore, to the theory of a primitive pattern or archetype of beauty, originally existing in the human soul, by a reference to which all the principles of taste are determined. We maintain, on the contrary, that man is so constituted, that the sight of peculiar objects immediately calls up an emotion of pleasure or disgust ; that this emotion, having characteristic features, and being distinguished thereby from all other emotions, receives its distinct name as the sentiment or feeling of the beautiful ; that its presence being agreeable to the mind, we are led to search after objects which will excite it ; and that objects are immediately perceived to be beautiful or not, according as they call up this emotion or its opposite, and not in reference to any idea or standard whatever, whether founded on previous experience, or evolved by spontaneous intuition.

Now the question between these two theories must be determined, if at all, by known facts respecting the growth or cultivation of taste in the individual mind. The judgment of the child and the uninstructed person in matters of taste is grossly erroneous. A gaudy dress, a tumid style, a daub with bright colors, an unmeaning jingle of sounds, excite a pleasant emotion in him ; and his admiration of such objects for the moment is perhaps as hearty, as the delight which a cultivated mind experiences on surveying the wonders of ancient or modern art. But experience soon corrects the faulty decision. The full glow of wonder and delight at such perceptions passes off at the first view. If the objects are repeatedly seen, the emotion no longer arises. The individual finds, upon trial, that less obtrusive and glaring sights gain on him as they are examined ; that the emotion rises as high and continues longer, when the object calls up by association a greater number of kindred ideas ; when he is enabled to perceive a meaning and purpose in the disposition of the parts ; when colors are so disposed that they harmonize and pass into each other by imperceptible gradations ; when the drawing accurately represents known scenes and persons ; in fine, when the mind is longest occupied in tracing out resemblances, proportions, relations, and associated ideas. For during all the time that the attention is thus occupied, the pleasant emotion continues, while it rapidly passes off after the first view of the former objects, which afford no such prolonged occupation to the intellect. The individual may now, if he choose, return upon his steps, and form a theory respecting the elements common to those objects, which he found to afford him the greatest and most durable pleasure, and thus lay down principles of taste, and form an artificial standard of beauty, whereby to direct his future judgments.

How do these facts accord with the two explanations given above ? All persons of cultivated minds agree with each other, so far as the emotion is concerned ; they all admire the same things. But when they come to discuss the principles of taste, to determine the idea of beauty, no two theories are alike. And the judgment in respect to pleasing objects is instantaneous. The beholder does not stop to compare the sight, either with a natural or artificial standard, but pronounces at once on its beauty or deformity. Mr. Alison did not wait to reckon up all the associated ideas, which

a landscape, a statue, or a painting, brought to his mind, before he determined, whether it was beautiful or not. He experienced the pleasure first, and afterwards labored to find its sources. Moreover, if there be an original idea of beauty in the mind, the judgment of the child must be more correct than that of the critical student of *aesthetics*, for the idea in his case is nearer its fountain ; it is less perverted and dimmed by experience.

This discussion, introduced only to illustrate our main argument, has already carried us too far, though a multitude of other considerations might be adduced against the theory, which assigns to the idea of beauty a place among the primitive intuitions of reason. But enough has been said, perhaps, to leave no doubt in an unprejudiced mind. We come then to examine a perfectly similar instance, the nature of the religious principle in the soul. We believe, that man was created with a capacity and inclination for worship, with a deep feeling of reverence and veneration, which finds no appropriate object on which to expend itself among the persons and things, with which it is associated on earth, but constantly seeks for such an object, and usually obtains it in the conception of some spiritual existence, higher and holier than itself. Benjamin Constant properly designates this principle as the religious *sentiment*, and with great learning and ingenuity has traced the history of its developement under all the religious forms and systems, which have obtained at different times among the inhabitants of the globe. The feeling itself, however powerful, is blind and instinctive ; its object is not given along with it, but is left to be traced out by the active intellect, questioning and interpreting the operations of nature. In this respect, it agrees with the feeling of moral approbation and the sentiment of taste, which are respectively a capacity of being deeply moved and affected by a view of right actions and beautiful scenes, but which remain dormant, until a perception of such objects calls them forth. The idea is not given along with them, for if it were, they would remain constantly in exercise. It is even a sign of a morbid, though excited state of the moral sentiment, when its energies are spent on the contemplation of some ideal and abstract pattern of virtue, instead of being applied practically in determining right actions, and directing conduct. So the religious emotion is unprofitably wasted, when it is turned from the con-

temptation of an infinite Being, and diffused over vague and abstract principles, with which it can hold no communion. Its proper object is a person ; its proper expression is worship. And, unless prayer is a mockery, and the devout affection itself a feverish delusion, such a Person exists, and, by instilling this sentiment, has erected his own altar in the hearts of men.

If we seek to go further, and to find by the side of this feeling, or beneath it, an innate idea of the object to which it relates, we are either drawn into the heated region of mysticism, or engage in a vain contest against accredited facts in psychology and history. The idea cannot be found in the undisciplined mind, and, if it could, it would not prove the existence of its object. Every person would frame his own unreal and fantastic conception, to usurp the name and prerogative of this idea, and, resting on the fidelity of this assumed intuitive notion, he would not allow it to be corrected by the light of nature or the deductions of reason. The conception of the Divine nature would thus be corrupted by the crude and debasing notions of the illiterate understanding, or by the insane fancies of the mystagogue. But the doctrine, that the proper object of the religious feeling is to be sought in study and contemplation of the material and intellectual universe, which, if such a being exists, is his work, leaves our idea of his nature to be corrected and purified by the increasing fruits of such study and the natural growth of the intellect. It does not oblige us to shut our eyes on all ulterior sources of information, on all indications of his character afforded by his works, for fear of tarnishing or falsifying his primitive image in the soul. This doctrine creates the science of Natural Theology, the study of which, according to the other hypothesis, is a needless and unprofitable task. The existence of the religious feeling does not afford a direct argument for the reality of its proper object, but it creates an antecedent presumption, which is of no small weight and importance in the inquiry, which it first excited and stimulated.

But the metaphysical theologians of our day are not content with the undoubted fact, that a religious sentiment exists, as a part of the original constitution of our nature, unless they can add to it an *a priori* conception of pure reason. Compelled by a multitude of unanswerable facts and argu-

ments, for a plain summary of which we may refer to the first book of Locke's "Essay," to relinquish the position, that there is an innate and distinct idea of God in the soul, they have recourse to the vague and inappreciable conception of the Infinite, sometimes boldly identifying it, as Cousin does, with the Divine nature, and hereby reducing the Deity to an abstract idea, and sometimes avoiding this conclusion only by generalities and unmeaning phrases. Were this theory introduced, not in connexion with the theological argument, as a resting-point for religious faith, but as a part of a metaphysical system, as pure speculation, its vagueness and uncertainty might be pardoned, in view of the necessary imperfection of philosophical language. But in such a connexion as this, bearing on the most momentous of all facts to the human race, we feel constrained to ask for an explicit account of the idea, on which the whole religious fabric is made to rest. What is this conception of the Infinite? Is it of a person, or thing, which can be made an object of worship? Or is it merely an attribute of being, like intelligence, justice, or holiness? Or is it rather an attribute of an attribute, a word expressive of the degree, in which certain qualities exist, as when we speak of "infinite goodness, mercy, and truth"? Does it exist as a clear conception in the mind, or is it a word that merely expresses the incapacity of the human intellect to comprehend the extent of certain attributes? Does it merely teach, that certain qualities go beyond the reach of human understanding, but how much beyond we cannot tell? Natural Theology is a practical science, as it is wholly occupied with truths which are intended to exert a direct influence over the conduct of men, and we have a right, therefore, to demand that the terms used in it should be clearly defined.

This predetermination to find an instinctive religious idea in every human soul has led to much profitless discussion of the question, whether any real atheist ever existed. At least, apart from this theory, we see no good cause for disputing, whether one philosopher or another can properly be called by this name or not. The appellation implies reproach; it is a contumelious one, and some may desire to relieve a favorite author from the opprobrium, which it conveys. There is some Quixotism, perhaps, in contending with great earnestness to free from this accusation a writer

who has long since passed off the stage, and has left none behind him, that have an immediate interest in his reputation. With his memory, be it good or bad, we have nothing to do. The real question is, whether certain writings have an atheistical tendency ; whether certain opinions lead to atheism, or constitute atheism itself. And this question can be very easily resolved, if we do not allow ourselves to be blinded by a most arbitrary abuse of terms. The doctrine that only one substance exists, and that this substance is material, has existed from all eternity, and is governed only by necessary laws inherent in itself, we suppose all will admit to be atheism. The common name given to this substance and its inherent attributes is *Nature*. But let a writer strenuously uphold this same doctrine, only changing the name of the substance, and calling it God instead of Nature, and great offence is given, if he is pronounced an atheist. In like manner, some of the ancients, denying the existence of any other gods, believed in one infinite and omnipresent principle, which, though without foresight, intelligence, or personality, directed all events by its irresistible agency ; and this opinion, if not atheism, is admitted to be something very like it. But some modern metaphysicians propound the same theory, only naming this principle *God* instead of *Fate*, and they, forsooth, are good theists.

Again we say, Do not let these remarks be misconstrued, or tortured into a charge against the good name of any particular writer. Our only purpose is, to illustrate the mischief and folly of introducing metaphysical theories into the domain of natural or revealed religion. Nor do we seek, in any manner, to deprecate the study of that science, which, as in some sense the head and fountain of most other sciences, assumes to itself, *par excellence*, the name of Philosophy. We attempt only to ascertain its proper limits, and to maintain its authority within those limits. And here we do but follow the admirable precept of Bacon, whose authority in this question, both as a philosopher and a believer, is surely entitled to respect. “ *Tantoque magis hæc vanitas inhibenda venit, et coërcenda, quia ex divinorum et humanarum malesanâ admixtione, non solum educitur philosophia phantastica, sed etiam religio hæretica.*”

To return for a moment to the hypothesis of an innate idea, on which religion is founded, we observe, that it is con-

tradicted by the endless variety of religious systems, which have obtained in the world, and which still exist among men. This variety is precisely what might be expected, if the human race, feeling an irresistible impulse to reverence and adoration of something higher and holier than themselves, but having no primitive and common idea of the object of universal worship, should proceed to search for it with that degree of the light of nature and reason, which can be attained in different stages of refinement and mental cultivation. The savage makes his idol of a block or stone, and in many cases worships it with a fervor and self-sacrifice, that shame the colder homage offered by a civilized race to a nobler God. The half-enlightened barbarian finds a Divinity all around him, and peoples the mountains, the streams, and the forests with their attendant deities. More cultivated still, his thirst for knowledge leads him to study the heavens, and the sun, moon, and stars become the gods of a religious system, which seems by comparison almost spiritual. Finally, whether by the last triumph of the unaided intellect, or by special revelation, the sublime doctrine of monotheism is preached to the world, and calls for the purest form and highest degree of reverence, of which the human heart is capable. How comprehensive and vague must be that universal idea, which is realized alike in the Fetish of the savage, the Olympic council of Grecian deities, the heavenly bodies, and the God of Christianity. No wonder, that the philosophers have chosen the most vague and ill-defined word in the language, — the “Infinite,” to express this common idea.

We have discussed nearly all the forms, in which the *a priori* or demonstrative argument has presented itself, and our readers can decide for themselves on the justice of the extravagant pretensions, that have been advanced in its favor. The question about its amounting to a perfect demonstration of the point at issue is too idle to be entertained for a moment. If there be any truth in logic, no question about real existence, nothing but general truths and pure abstractions, can be established by demonstrative reasoning. And with respect to these, the moment that the problem is solved, of finding the proper media of proof, and the chain of argument is complete, no doubt can be entertained for a moment of the reasoner’s success. The mere existence of the question, therefore, is sufficient proof, that in this case he has failed.

No one doubts that the reasoning in Euclid is demonstrative, that the equality of the three angles of a triangle to two right angles is established with absolute certainty. But in this case, there are not only the atheists, who deny that the point is proved at all, but many believers, who can see nothing but a bundle of assumptions and sophistries in the argument, which, according to some persons, is apodictical. There is no escaping the force of this consideration, unless some one has the impudence to maintain, that among the multitude who question the validity of the *a priori* argument, there is not one who is capable of understanding it. We will not stoop to notice this allegation, further than by adverting to the fact, that in no form of this argument does the conclusion lie more than a step or two from the premises. The reasoning either of Descartes, Clarke, or Cousin, can be fully stated in three sentences. There are many persons, who are not able to read the *Principia*, or the *Mécanique Céleste*; but very few, who cannot put together the first three propositions in geometry.

The question, whether it be good policy to expose the inconclusiveness of any argument adduced in favor of this great doctrine, will not detain us long. Truth can stand on its own basis, and needs no support from sophistry. We do not hold to cheating people into the belief of any thing, — not even of the existence of a God. But, in respect to the good intentions of those who bring forward this plea, and who wish to leave untouched every prop on which the tottering faith of a single individual can by any possibility find support, this consideration should not be so summarily put aside. We affirm, then, that the question does not relate to the entire validity, but to the proper character of certain proofs. It has been shown, that the reasoning both of Descartes and Clarke involves an element *a posteriori*, that the whole force of it rests upon this element, and consequently, that, when the argument is properly stated, it is perfectly legitimate and conclusive. We feel no scruple in combating the reasoning of Cousin, in the precise form in which he stated it, for that philosopher himself has unwittingly exposed its atheistical tendency.* But the other forms of the *a priori* argument, when stripped of the metaphysical abstractions and sophistries, by

* See *North American Review*, No. CXII. pp. 35, 36.

which they are encumbered and rendered unintelligible to many minds, and of the pretension to absolute certainty, which serves only to discredit the other proofs, when placed beside them, may all be welcomed into the science of Natural Theology, as tending, with more or less force, to substantiate the truth, which all minds are interested in supporting. We remark, further, that this anxiety to preserve every argument, so that the question may be decided by their cumulative weight, appears rather inconsistent on the part of those reasoners, who affirm that several of these proofs amount to a perfect demonstration. The mathematician is quite satisfied, when he has found one mode of demonstrating a proposition, and never thinks of searching for another, except as a matter of pure curiosity.

But an unwillingness is manifested to reduce the great doctrine of the Divine existence to the class of contingent truths ; and it is openly asserted, that, in the endless series of years, which we are here obliged to contemplate, an argument founded only on probabilities gradually wastes away, and finally disappears entirely. Here is the very mistake, which we have already commented upon, of supposing that moral and demonstrative reasoning differ not only in kind, but in degree. We repeat it, then, that a fact which rests upon moral certainty is equally conclusive and satisfactory with a principle which is established with absolute certainty ; and we appeal to the convictions and conduct of the whole human race in support of this assertion. If it were no more possible to doubt the being of a God, than for any individual to doubt, that his own death must happen some time within a century, atheism and skepticism would be practically impossible. But there are a multitude of contingent truths, in comparison with which even the probability of death appears faint and uncertain. Human intellect is made up from them ; man's life is guided by them from the cradle to the grave. To affect anxiety, lest men should have no more evidence for believing the great doctrine of theology, than they have for thinking that food will nourish, fire burn, or water drown them ; that any city exists, which they have not visited ; that any person lives, with whom they have not conversed ; or that any one intelligent being exists except themselves,— is an absurdity only to be equalled by supposing, that the faith which they have in these things, whatever it may be, can be

increased and strengthened by a metaphysical argument made up of pure abstractions, which the greater part of mankind cannot understand at all, and would pay no attention to it, even if it were intelligible.

The assertion which we are now considering goes the whole length of affirming, that merely probable evidence in this inquiry is not satisfactory, and ought to be rejected altogether. Let those who make it remember, that the ablest supporters of the argument *a priori* frankly admit, — what appears, indeed, on the very face of their proof, — that the intelligence of the Deity cannot be substantiated by their reasoning, and must be accepted, if at all, on the ground of moral conviction. Are they prepared to maintain, that, while the being of a God is demonstrated, his intelligence is not satisfactorily proved, and ought not to be admitted? Are they willing to teach mankind, that disbelief of the Divine existence is indeed an absurdity, but that any faith in his wisdom and providence is fallacious; that we have no good grounds for supposing him to be any thing else than an unconscious principle, acting from blind necessity, without intention or foresight? No; they are not ready to defend or believe this monstrous proposition. Though the philosophers, to whose guidance they have unwisely committed themselves, really contemplated this consequence of their reasoning, and wished to inculcate it, their Christian disciples, at least, rather than accept such a corollary, will gladly renounce the demonstration.

In arguing against the sufficiency of moral evidence for the being of an Infinite Creator, by alluding to the endless lapse of years, which, according to some reasoners, it is necessary to consider in the reasoning, there is a want of fullness and precision in stating the difficulty. At the first view, the objection does not appear pertinent, for what has eternity to do with the question? The lapse of time does not affect truth. A probability, which amounts to moral certainty now, will possess the same value and degree countless ages hence, as it did centuries ago; for then, even as now, “the heavens declared the glory of God, and the firmament showed his handy-work.” The circumstances or phenomena, on which the argument is founded, remaining the same, or being constantly reproduced, the conclusion must follow with equal certainty through all time. We admit, that

if the argument from design inferred the being of a God only from an act of creation, which took place six thousand years ago, or more, the difficulty alleged assumes meaning and pertinency, though it has little value. It is founded on the noted atheistical assumption, as old, at least, as Lucretius, that a fortuitous concourse of atoms in an infinite series of years may take the appearance of regularity and adaptation; — that the chance of order is at least one out of an infinite number of chances of disorder, and therefore must occur at least once during an eternity. Knowing, — if it be not a contradiction in terms, — that an infinite series of ages has passed, we can only infer from the phenomena around us, that we live at the particular epoch in eternity's history, when chance has assumed the appearance of order and design. Thus, by the anxiety to invalidate or throw a suspicion on the argument from final causes, which encourages us to look for proof, not in abstract propositions, but over the whole face of nature, the objector unwittingly gives in to that low theory of materialism, which represents the universe as a great machine, that was wound up at the time of creation, and has continued to go on mechanically ever since, without interference, oversight, or support from its Maker. He forgets, that the difficulty alleged has neither force nor pertinency, when the argument from design is so stated as to prove, not merely that a God did exist, when the world was created, but that he exists now, and is continually manifesting himself in fresh works of wisdom and goodness. Divine energy was not exhausted in first building a world. It continues and acts, and creation is constantly going on around us.

The argument from design, properly applied, gives proof of intelligence and activity from the continuance, and not merely from the beginning, of things. It proceeds not only from the creation of the race, but from the birth of the individual. In the seed which swelled under the last night's rain, in the shoot which appeared under this morning's sun, it finds proof of ever present and ever acting power. To the reflecting theist,

“The world's unwithered countenance
Is bright as at creation's day,”

and reflects as clearly its Maker's image. Having already glanced at this aspect of the argument in a former article, our

limits will not permit us now to enter the broad field of remark and illustration which it opens. But a single view may be taken of it, from a point which lies so near the metaphysical argument, that it may be acceptable to those persons who can trust to nothing but that kind of reasoning.

Admitting, for a moment, the general principle, which we regard as wholly indefensible and unphilosophical, that in the *material* universe the argument from the effect to the cause finds place only at the beginning of a succession of beings, and not at any one link in that succession, in the world of *mind* we have irrefragable evidence at every step, which leads us up from the created directly to the Creator. This evidence appears in the essential unity of personality, in our recognition of the indivisible *Ego* in consciousness. *I am one.* The living, sentient, thinking being, which I call *self*, possesses a separate and indivisible existence. It is *necessarily* one, for we cannot conceive of it as many, or as separable, or divisible in any sense. Such a supposition is an absurdity. But I began to be; for time was when I was not. Then whence came I? The theory,—which we are here taking for granted in respect to the world of matter,—which refers the beginning of an individual's existence to the first creation of the race to which he belongs, which considers intelligent life as continuous through a succession of beings, one springing out of another, and then giving birth to a third, by virtue of principles infused or machinery contrived in the race, when the original progenitor of it was formed,—this theory, we say, will not hold in the present case. It is contradicted by the great fact of my existence as an indivisible unit. Complexity of parts, according to the materialist's hypothesis, is essential to the propagation of existence. The seed exists in the fruit; the germ exists in the seed. It is afterwards taken from the fruit and the seed, and begins to exist as a distinct plant. But this is the commencement of its *separate*, not of its *total* being. It existed before; it was in the parent plant, as a part of it, and its birth was not a creation, but a division of existence. The beginning of any material life, a tree, a flower, an animal, is not the creation of any thing new, but the developement of a germ, which existed ages before,—which has lived ever since the world was. But the beginning of intellectual life, the essential unity of which is attested by consciousness, cannot be ex-

plained by mere separation. It cannot give birth to another by division of itself. In fine, the materialist affirms, that birth is but a separation, and growth but an accretion and assimilation, of parts that previously existed, though in an inorganic state ; for it is a necessary part of this hypothesis, that the number of primary particles in the universe is neither more nor less than it was at the creation. Meeting him on his own ground, we reply, that his own personal existence is certain proof, that at least one unit has been added to the mass of being, since the formation of the universe. Of course, we have every reason from analogy to believe, that the beginning of life in all cases, even animal and vegetable, is the addition of a unit to the sum of being, and therefore a direct act of creation, as much as the building of a world or a system. But only in intellectual life have we positive evidence of this fact from consciousness.

Fully to expose the erroneousness of that grovelling theory of materialism, which deprives this fair universe of the present and continuous agency of the Creative Mind, would carry us far beyond our present limits. Returning, therefore, to a consideration of the course, which is likely to afford most support to the doctrines of Natural Religion, it may be remarked, that the only effectual answer to the objections of the metaphysical skeptics consists in showing, that their reasoning is wholly inapplicable and impertinent. Of course, the atheist must be met wherever he is to be found ; but he can be successfully met as well by showing that his arguments have no bearing upon the point at issue, as by exposing the fallacy and inconclusiveness of the arguments themselves. Every one knows, that nearly all the skeptical objections to the doctrine of the Divine existence are of a metaphysical character, and are directed solely against the unwise assertion, that the reasoning of the theist is demonstrative. The two most formidable opponents of the doctrine, Hume and Kant, reasoned entirely in this manner. Probably neither of them wholly disbelieved the doctrine itself, but, with all the perverse ingenuity of a skeptical turn of mind, and the pride of a subtle intellect in detecting and exposing the assumptions and sophistries of the metaphysicians, they labored to create an apparent opposition between the faith of the heart and the deductions of the understanding. They attacked, not the Christian believer, but the philosophical dogmatist. They

showed triumphantly the inconclusiveness of the demonstration, but left untouched the overwhelming probability arising from the moral argument. Kant expressly admitted, that the proof from final causes, if not set forward as a demonstration, is sound and legitimate. Arriving at the same conclusion by a different road, Hume attacked the *necessary* reasoning from the effect to the cause, but avowed, both in his writings and conduct, that we must believe in a causal connexion ; and some passages in his later writings are construed, not without reason, to imply that he himself, on this ground, admitted the being of a God. He was a better reasoner and a more acute thinker than most of his opponents, for he perceived the exact reach and application of his own arguments. Both of these philosophers were guilty of a want of ingenuousness, perhaps also of a direct intention to deceive, by not constantly avowing that their objections reached the theistical argument, so far only as it claimed to be a demonstration of the point at issue, and thereby leaving it to be inferred that they invalidated the whole proof. And this erroneous inference has been confirmed by the course adopted by many writers on the opposite side, who, more anxious to defend metaphysics than to support Natural Theology, have unwisely joined issue on the point as presented by the skeptics, and failing, — where, according to all the principles of logic, they ought to have expected failure, — to establish the proof as a demonstration, they have allowed their own ill-success to be imputed to the weakness of their cause. And yet they turn round on one who advises the abandonment of this point, which nobody but a metaphysician cares any thing about, and accuse him of withdrawing the props of theological science, and weakening the position of the theist.

If Natural Theology be placed on the same level with the other inductive sciences, the great truths which it involves are for ever secured against the assaults of general skepticism and atheistical philosophy. No reasoning can touch it, which does not in a still greater degree affect the certainty of every proposition in human science. The irrelevancy of nearly every atheistical argument, which can be found in the books, will appear at the first glance ; and the skeptic must either abandon the discussion altogether, or find some mode of attacking religious truth, without making at the same time the insane attempt to crush the whole fabric of man's belief into

utter ruin. But this secure position cannot be taken, unless the defender of theism will give up his pride in metaphysics, and his undue pretensions. He cannot deny to his opponent the use of such weapons as he wields himself. He cannot reject in one part of the argument the issue which he offers in another. While one party reasons with Descartes and Clarke, the other will reply with Hume, Spinoza, and Kant ; and, where entire victory is not possible on either side, the advantage will always remain with the skeptic.

It is very true, that the doctrine of the being of a God would be set aside by the establishment of universal skepticism,—by a system of philosophy which destroys all beliefs, tears up all the sciences by the roots, and leaves mankind incapable of knowledge, action, or hope. But in such a general calamity, who cares what single plank is saved from the wreck ? Why is Natural Theology singled out as the only science that is to be burdened with the necessity of fighting alone against an assault which is to destroy all, and in warding off which, of course, all the sciences are equally interested ? The geologist, the chemist, the astronomer, do not deem it necessary to commence their labors with a demonstration of the fundamental principles of belief, and the sufficiency of the human faculties for the pursuit of truth. They leave this task for the metaphysician, as falling wholly within his province. Let him go on with his proper work of erecting intrenchments along the whole borders of human belief, and making incursions into the ground of skepticism, and we bid him God speed in the enterprise. But do not let him fasten on the one fact which is dearest of all to man, as if that alone were interested in his success, and thereby make it alone responsible for all his mistakes and failures. Let him, at least, give some plausible reasons for such a course ; let him show some ground of distinction between Natural Theology and Natural Philosophy, which compels the proficient to adopt a mode of defence for the former, which he would be laughed at for using in regard to the latter. The being of a God is a truth of practical and vital importance. The defence of philosophy against the assaults of general skepticism is a purely speculative contest. Whichever way determined, it never affected the actions of any sane person since the world began. Hume ate his dinner, not doubting that the *effect* of the food would be to nourish and strengthen his body ; and

he wrote and published his books, fully believing that intelligent people would read them, though he had no grounds to believe that any such persons existed, except by arguing from experience,—from the indications of intelligence and design. And yet he sought to deter men from believing in the existence of a God, by arguments that ought to have prevented him from swallowing food, or from writing a line. No! we do him wrong; he expected no such thing. He proposed a logical puzzle for the philosophers to solve, and they strangely supposed that all religious belief was involved in their success.

If the doctrines of Natural Religion only were at stake,—if the evil stopped with the injudicious treatment of the argument for the being of a God,—this protest against the introduction of purely speculative metaphysics might seem to be too warmly expressed. Unhappily, the mischief does not end here. No one, who has watched the progress of speculation of late years, can be ignorant of the use made of the intimate connexion between religion and philosophy, to set up a claim of precedence and authority for the latter, which is wholly of human origin, and to reduce the former to a mere province to be governed, modified, and altered at will. That ominous phrase, “the philosophy of religion” is constantly dinned into our ears, even by theologians, while we seek in vain for any evidence of the religious character of the popular philosophy. The effect thus far has been, to give to all the doctrines of faith something of the wavering and unsettled air, which belongs to the fluctuations of metaphysical opinions, and the rise and fall of systems. The question is not like one between different theological sects, which acknowledge a common rule and guide, but it concerns the establishment of a new standard, by which all forms of religion are to be tried. In fine, the question is, whether we are to have a religious faith with something fixed, with the God of nature and the Scriptures to rest upon, or whether we are to take such a one as the philosophers will make for us, which shall be one thing under the system of Kant, and another under that of Cousin.

If it were not for the serious character of the subject, one might even be amused at the extravagance of the claims put forward by speculative metaphysicians, and their assumption of perfect authority to decide on all matters of religious be-

lief. They ground their theories on the supposed intuitive ideas and convictions of the soul, which are multiplied and characterized at random, and which it is sensualism, or atheism, or something worse, to question or deny ; and, building upon these premises what they call a structure of demonstrative reasoning, they arrive at results that are *necessary*, — which mankind *must* believe. To these results, all preconceived notions, all matters of mere religious faith, all revelations grounded on testimony, or other sources of what is only *moral* evidence, must either give way or conform. Take an instance in what is commonly termed the *Transcendental Philosophy*, or the system of Kant. By a critical survey of the human understanding, he undertook to separate what is contingent, empirical, and uncertain in man's belief, from what is absolute, original, and imperative. Confining the term *knowledge*, to those elements which present these latter characteristics, he attempted to determine and classify them all under the name of the “*a priori* conceptions of pure reason,” and thus to supply an immovable basis for all future systems of philosophy. In this undertaking he followed the example of Descartes, who, as we have seen, propounded his theory in order to do away with the endless mistakes and retrogressions of former philosophers, and to create a foundation with absolute certainty for future effort.

As the scheme, in both instances, covered the whole field of human knowledge, the dogma of the Divine existence came naturally to be examined, and its claims to be discussed, by both writers. But in this portion of the task the Frenchman was more fortunate than his German successor. Descartes fancied, that he had found a demonstrative proof of the being of a God, and this doctrine was accordingly built into his theory, as a component part of it. Kant was not so happy. He tried all the proofs that had been offered, and found them all defective ; and he completed his work by proving to a demonstration, that no proof could be offered, that the subject lay entirely beyond the reach of the human faculties, that the arguments for and against, must always balance each other, and, consequently, that no decision was possible. But, as it appeared that men were not very willing to give up the old-fashioned notion of a Deity, in a subsequent work, the “Critique of Practical Reason,” or the survey of the moral faculty, Kant found occasion to admit the

doctrine in question, not as substantiated by any process of reasoning,—for this he expressly disclaims,—but as an assumption, a postulate, a proposition which men must believe, though they can show no reason for it. At this point, the theory was taken up by a zealous disciple, and carried forward to the criticism of revealed religion on the same principles, which had settled so satisfactorily the claims of Natural Theology.

Fichte's "Critique of all Revelation" was only the anticipation of a work subsequently performed by Kant himself; the same results, substantially, being obtained, that were afterwards developed in Kant's treatise, entitled "Religion within the Limits of mere Reason." Fichte proposed to establish a "Critique," that is, a fundamental examination on the principles of the Critical, or Transcendental, philosophy, not of that revelation in which Christians are specially interested, nor of any other in particular, but of all possible revelations. In other words, supposing the existence of a God, and of a race of beings constituted and situated as we are, he proposes to determine whether it be possible, that he should make a special communication to his creatures, and, if so, in what way it is possible. The inquiry is to be carried on, not as a mere speculation, but like a piece of mathematical reasoning, and the results, if any are obtained, are to be as little susceptible of doubt, as any theorem in Euclid.

And what are the results, at which the inquirer arrives in this bold attempt to settle the bounds of human belief, and prescribe laws to Omnipotence, as to the manner in which he shall make known his will to mankind? Why, that any revelation is unnecessary and impossible,—at least, that it can never be recognised as such, though we may wish to believe in it;—that the revealed doctrine can make no addition to our knowledge or our hopes;—that, if it contains any thing more than the law written in our own hearts, it cannot be of divine origin; and, if it be perfectly coincident with that law, it is useless, and can in no proper sense be called a revelation;—that, although the conception of a miracle is possible, a miraculous event can never be known as such, from the want of a sufficient test;—and that a revelation by means of such events could not be addressed to any persons but those who had lost even the desire to comply with the demands of conscience, and its usefulness even to them would cease,

when the moral sense was once awakened. Such is the result of a system of philosophy, that sets up the entire supremacy of the “*a priori* conceptions of pure reason,” and of demonstrative reasoning founded upon them,—thus erecting a metaphysical tribunal, before which all faith in God, in the Scriptures, in any revelation, is to be brought for trial, to be modified or rejected at will. The sophism in respect to revealed religion is precisely the same with that which we have attempted to expose in the province of Natural Theology. Beginning with the assumption, that moral evidence in such a case is wholly unsatisfactory and deceptive ; and, seeking for demonstration where, from the nature of the case and the laws of the human mind, it cannot be obtained, they find it not, and consequently declare, that man’s faith is vain, and all religious belief, properly so called, is a mere delusion. Of course, a revelation attested by miracles is an external fact, and must be proved, if at all, by testimony and experience. But these are sources only of moral reasoning ; and, as such a proof, even when carried to the highest extent, is declared to be insufficient to establish the belief in a God, so it cannot confirm our faith in a revelation of God to men. In the latter case, unfortunately, demonstration is admitted on all hands to be impossible, and, therefore, nothing remains but to renounce our faith in revelation altogether.

This is but a single specimen of the arrogant manner in which the claims of religious faith are treated by those writers, who assume that all theology is but a province of philosophy, but one speculation among many others, all of which must be brought to their tribunal, and judged by the standard of their metaphysical theory. In the flood of philosophical systems in Germany, the publication of which followed the daring innovations of Kant, many other examples might be found of an equally summary and destructive treatment of the doctrines both of natural and revealed religion. The infidel movement in that country, hardly second in extent and importance to that which the Encyclopedists commenced in France, if it did not take its rise among the philosophers, certainly borrowed from them its arms, its general aspect, and its influence. The infidel publications are saturated with the terminology, the forms, and the doctrines of the modern schools of metaphysics, to an extent that makes them hardly

intelligible to one, who has not a previous knowledge of this new philosophical jargon.

We know that an attempt is made, to trace the commencement of these infidel speculations in Germany, beyond the philosophers of that country, to the influence of the English deists, as they are termed, — to the writings of Collins, Tindal, Chubb, and Morgan. Those who can find in the speculations referred to, any of the characteristics of the English tone of thought, any traces of similarity in argument and doctrine between the two classes of writers, must be gifted with greater powers of perception than are usual, or, — what is far more likely, — with a predisposition to find or see nothing to the prejudice of German metaphysics. The purpose of such a strange assertion, is to trace the root of the evil, not to its home among those modern speculations in which it took its rise and its peculiar aspect, but to another country, and to a class of unbelievers, whose errors may with some show of reason be attributed to the philosophy of Locke. It is the singular fate of this last-mentioned philosopher, whose writings, more than any others of the class to which they belong, are pervaded with the Christian spirit, and devoted to a defence of the Christian faith, to be made accountable for nearly all the speculative errors and infidel opinions, which have been broached since his time. It is not enough, that the skepticism of Hume, and the sensualism of Condillac are laid to his charge, but he must be made accountable also, by implication at least, for the extravaganzas of a set of German infidels in our own day ; though it would be difficult to find a stronger contrast, in point of thought, expression, and doctrine, than that which exists between their speculations and the writings of the father of English philosophy. The idle calumny, which imputes to him the origin of the debasing theory, entertained by the French sensual school of the last century, has been refuted a hundred times, and deserves no further notice. Even the assertion, that Hume borrowed his principles from Locke, if understood to mean that the philosophy of the latter especially favors the skepticism of the former, or leads to it by necessary implication, so that Hume became an infidel only because he studied Locke, and not in spite of such study, is wholly untrue. The subtle and wary skeptic, whose enterprise was not to build, but to destroy, — who intended to con-

sute the philosophers on their own ground, founded his reasonings on what was the popular philosophy of his day. He borrowed his principles from the "Essay on the Human Understanding," just as he would have borrowed them, if he had lived in our times, from the speculations of Kant and Cousin. A skeptic by nature and temperament, and not by education or by consequence of opinions imbibed from others, his writings were intended to be, not a continuation or a developement of Locke's philosophy, but a refutation of it. He was not half so much indebted to his English predecessor, as Spinoza was to Descartes ; but who thinks of charging upon the father of French philosophy the atheism or pantheism of the infidel Jew ?

But we protest against mingling the doctrines of theology with any metaphysical speculations, — against identifying the cause of religious truth with the defence of any human system. It matters not whether Locke or Descartes, Spinoza or Kant, Cousin or Schelling, be the individual selected, through whose theories we are to attack, defend, or modify man's faith in things which are not of this world. The mixture is of two incongruous things, and nothing can result from it but a bastard compound, which will have all the defects, but none of the excellences, of either ingredient. In calling for a separation, nothing more is claimed for theology, than is granted by universal consent to the other sciences. Why is the theologian only to be followed with the constant accusation of being deluded by the sensual system, when he simply opens his eyes upon the universe around him, and reasons upon the information afforded by the senses ? Why not accuse the naturalist, the astronomer, the artist of the same thing ? These provinces of science are kept as distinct as possible from theory and pure speculation, and are made to consist of observed facts, and immediate deductions from those facts. Metaphysical systems are contrived from time to time, with a view to cover the whole field of knowledge ; but the authors of them do not attempt directly to change the methods, modify the principles, or do away with the results of the inductive sciences. They are known to carry with them the habits of mind peculiar to their profession, — what Bacon expressly calls, "the smoke and tarnish of the furnace"; the tendency to generalize rapidly, to make sweeping innovations, to form new and entire theories, unchecked

by the presence of determinate and admitted facts, which in other branches of knowledge oppose an effectual barrier to the license of innovation and system-making. Theology has its facts, also, the most real and momentous of all. The beacon light of religious truth burns clear and steadily in its fixed and elevated position ; while the *ignes fatui* of philosophical speculation are glancing about through brake, morass, and thicket, too often indicating the presence of *miasmata* from swamps, or poisonous exhalations from graveyards.

Those who talk so much of the *philosophy of religion*, and of the necessity that it should keep pace with the constant advancement of the human mind, either use words without any meaning attached to them, or else they confound two perfectly distinct things, — religious progress in the individual soul, and the improvement of theology as a science. The former is possible to an unlimited extent. The whole of human life is a probation, the law of which is progress. But the only rational conception of Christian Theology is that of something more fixed and durable than the everlasting hills. The great truth of the being of a God, the great law of the Scriptures, lie there as standards, as ultimate points, beyond which there is no advancement, and from which there is no appeal. An individual may come to have a more perfect knowledge of the relations which connect him to the Deity ; though even here the improvement is rather of the heart, than of the intellect. But there are no discoveries to be made respecting the Divine nature, in the same sense as we speak of discoveries in human science. “ Who can by searching find out God ? Or who can understand the Almighty to perfection ? ” We can take away the conception of a God, and substitute an abstract idea, or a block of wood, — it matters not which, — in its place ; but we cannot amend or enlarge that conception, as it exists in a mind of ordinary powers and cultivation. There is no progress possible beyond monotheism, just as there was a progress from Fetichism to polytheism, and from that to the true doctrine of one God.

In like manner, the Scriptures form an ultimate tribunal in Christian Theology. Questions about their interpretation may arise, but the sense, when ascertained, is admitted to be absolute and decisive. Some persons may reject their authority ; they may make the same discovery as Tindal, the English Deist, that Christianity is “ as old as the creation.”

But it does not follow from such a discovery, that they have made any progress in theology ; they have simply ceased to be Christians. To unite theology with metaphysics is to break away from the two great anchors of religious faith, and then to drift about at random with a science, that acknowledges no restraint, has no fixed principles, and has never found a stay or a resting-place. Not all the authority ascribed to intuitive conceptions, not all the pride of demonstrative reasoning founded upon them, will be sufficient to check the frequency of errors and fluctuations, or to afford a fixed basis for future inquiry. The subject of investigation is too vast, the method of procedure too ill-determined, the idea of the results to be gained is too vague, to allow us to hope, that speculative philosophy will ever advance with a firmer step, or to a better purpose, than it has done through all past time. In the future as in the past, metaphysical demonstrations will be found to prove one thing with a Descartes, and directly the opposite thing with a Kant. The attempt is equally absurd and impious to break down the landmarks of religious faith, and to involve the dearest hopes of mankind in the uncertain and shifting fortunes of such an enterprise.

Some persons are not content with the proposed union between the two subjects of contemplation, but claim entire supremacy for human science. According to their theory, there are many stages of progress for the human intellect, and men pass on from religion to philosophy, as they do from barbarism to civilization. The spontaneous but rude development of the religious principle is followed by the more vigorous and sure growth of reflection, and philosophy becomes "the highest and last developement of human nature, the final accomplishment of human thought." But not to appear too presumptuous, not to shock the feelings of mankind too much, philosophy is represented as tolerant and liberal ; as superseding religion, it is true, in the minds of the cultivated and reflecting classes, but continuing to respect it, as an imperfect likeness of itself, in the bulk of mankind. These views may be best illustrated by a quotation from Cousin, in whose lectures they are ably and eloquently set forth. The extract is a choice one, and we commend it to the particular attention of the Christian admirers of the great Eclectic.

"Philosophy, in the great body of the people, exists under

the primitive, profoundly impressive, and venerable form of religion and of worship. Christianity is the philosophy of the people. He who now addresses you sprang from the people and from Christianity ; and I trust you will always recognise this, in my profound and tender respect for all that is of the people and of Christianity. Philosophy is patient ; she knows what was the course of events in former generations, and she is full of confidence in the future ; happy, in seeing the great bulk of mankind in the arms of Christianity, *she offers, WITH MODEST KINDNESS, her hand to Christianity, to assist her in ascending to a yet loftier elevation.*"*

Admirable condescension ! M. Cousin stands forth as the self-appointed representative of all philosophy, and kindly *patronizes* Christianity. But we must save our feelings by speaking in a straight-forward way. If the absurdity and egregious self-conceit, which are so conspicuous in this passage, did not throw a strong light on the real value and probable influence of this writer's speculations, it might be necessary to call attention to their infidel character. But they may now be left to find their own level. The cause of religious truth has nothing to fear or to hope from such patrons, or from such assailants.

In France, the popularity of Cousin's philosophy has superseded that of Condillac, and many imagine, that under its influence, a reaction has taken place in favor of religion, against the materialism and the infidelity of the last age. Even if we were ignorant of the facts, there would be good reason to suspect the reality, and the pure character, of a religious movement produced by such a cause, and conducted by such a guide. "*Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis.*" But we are able to offer some direct testimony respecting the true nature of this religious reaction. A recent number of the *Journal des Débats*, the ablest and most influential newspaper in France, contains an interesting letter from one of the editors to the Bishop of Chartres, in reply to a severe censure which that prelate had passed upon an article on the state of the French church. From this letter, dated the 20th of December last, we translate a few paragraphs, which were written, it is true, for the meridian of Paris ; but they may not be wholly inapplicable further west.

* "Elle se contente de lui tendre doucement la main, et de l'aider à s'élèver plus haut encore. (*Attention marquée dans l'auditoire.*)"—*Cours de l'Histoire de la Philosophie : Deuxième Leçon.*

" For some years past, we have heard much talk about the religious reaction. It is proclaimed from the house-tops ; it is announced in all the pulpits, and in all the books. But when we begin to search after this strange phenomenon, what do we find ? We enter pretty little churches, with gilded ceilings, well warmed and carpeted, where one finds himself too comfortably placed on earth to be able to spend a thought on heaven. We hear the *Credo* sung with a waltz accompaniment, and dancing tunes played at the elevation of the Host. If a sermon is preached, the speaker feels obliged to disguise the objects of worship before presenting them to us, — to cover them up under all the frippery required by the taste of the age ; and how can it be expected, that preachers should prove the divine character of that, which they themselves are striving to render common and secular. Think you, that they talk to us about the Gospel, and about Christian morals ? No ; no such thing. They preach about Pythagoras, and Epicurus, and Spinoza ; or they have something to say about the invasion of the Goths, borrowing prosy remarks from writers on the philosophy of history. We go away from the church asking ourselves, what we have to do with Epicurus, and whether this is what is meant by a religious reaction.

" We find a new class of Christians springing up around us in the fashionable and literary world, who make a parade of their melancholy and their religious faith in halting verses, and prate about the Bhagavad Gita and the Zendavista, and the other topics of those lectures on philosophy, which are designed for people who wish to talk about every thing in general and nothing in particular. And these insipid persons, incapable alike of skepticism or belief, are constantly wearying us with harangues about the religious reaction.

" You will not suspect me, Sir, of the presumption and bad taste of wishing to read the clergy a lecture on theology. I do but give you the impression of those who live in this secular world, when I say, that perhaps the church was never in a more dangerous situation than it is at present. The greatest proof of the strength of Catholicism is, that it is able to resist, not an assault, not a war, but the peace, the conciliatory measures, the universal toleration, with which it is surrounded. We ask only for faith of one kind or another ; we accept every thing, and we would invent a religion, rather than be without one altogether. It behoves the members of the church to organize and turn to profit this necessity of believing something, which is now appearing amongst us, and, above all, to arrest it in its almost irresistible inclination towards mysticism.

" The priests have not understood this condition of things.

They have mistaken this readiness to accept any faith for a religious reaction. The misfortune of Christianity is, that they no longer fight against it ; it is embalmed, it is sanctified ; it is canonized like a saint. But you know better than I, Sir, that saints are only canonized after their death. It is dangerous to allow one's self to be made a relic of. The priests have gone to sleep, trusting to this perfidious calm. Having hardly escaped from the terrible attack of Voltaire, they hailed what was only disgust and weariness at materialism as a disposition to return to religion. In their eyes, every one who was a spiritualist became a religious man ; every one who repudiated the *Encyclopédie*, became a Christian. In their eagerness to rescue all minds from the philosophy of the last century, they accepted professions of faith, without being at all rigid in respect to rites and doctrines. They opened the gates to religious liberalism. They made a breach, and through this breach have entered pell-mell, pietism, sentimentalism, symbolism, and all sorts of Germanism. They no longer preach upon morals and doctrines, but upon Christian philosophy, and all kinds of historical and æsthetical generalities. At the present time, we want nothing better than religious belief ; but, if we must accept, as articles of faith, all that we hear from the pulpit, and s words of the Gospel, all the pitiable rhapsodies and contemptible contests about words, which are published by those who call themselves your organs, no wonder that our faith wavers and our hearts incline to doubt."

This is a lively picture of the confusion that results, when an erratic speculative philosophy assumes the name and garb of religion, without any of its spirit, and substitutes its own vague and unmeaning generalities in place of the vital truths of Natural Theology, and the doctrines of the Gospel. It remains to be seen, whether the study of the same writers and the prevalence of the same tastes will ever produce a counterpart to this state of things on our side of the Atlantic. One security against such an evil consists in the fact, that the antecedent circumstances in the two cases are different. We are not recovering from the prolonged torpor of materialism and infidelity, in order to be thrown by a reaction into the wilds of a mystical philosophy, and a heated, vague, and unsettled faith. It is an idle task to preach against sensualism and the empirical philosophy to the descendants of the Puritans ; it is merely apeing the manners and the sentiments of a few French declaimers, whose words have no

applicability or meaning for the western world. There are no admirers of Condillac among us ; and, if there are a few imitators of the Baron d' Holbach, their errors were not caused by the prevalence of one system of philosophy, nor will they be converted by the introduction of another. Metaphysical arguments will not cure that blindness and insensibility of heart and intellect, of which ignorance and heedlessness are the primary and the sustaining causes. Instead of calling upon such men to close their eyes and ears, and distrust the information given by their senses, for fear they should be deluded by empiricism, or some other philosophical bugbear, rather bid them open their minds and hearts to the sights and sounds of creation, and hear and see everywhere proofs of the being of a God. Preach the Gospel to them instead of metaphysical speculations, — remembering the pregnant aphorism of Bacon ; " As to seek philosophy in divinity is to seek the dead amongst the living, so to seek divinity in philosophy is to seek the living amongst the dead."

ART. VI.—*Monaldi : a Tale.* Boston : Charles C. Little and James Brown. 12mo. pp. 253.

THOUGH this little volume bears no author's name on its title-page, it is understood to be from the pen of Washington Allston. This great artist is a poet as well as painter ; and, were it not for his overshadowing fame as the foremost painter of his age, he would unquestionably have been renowned as one of our most graceful and imaginative poets. The collection of poems, published by him many years ago, and now out of print, shows the invention, and fancy, and curious felicity of expression, that mark the true son of song ; and, had Mr. Allston followed out the poetical career, he would most certainly have reached, ere this, the same eminence as a writer, to which his genius has borne him in art.

We feel, as Americans, no small pride in Mr. Allston's genius and fame. It is part and parcel, and no small part, of our national reputation. He is too much absorbed in the love of his art, and too much occupied with the lovely and immortal creations of his genius, to make himself